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## **Crichton's 'Strain' comes to A&E**

### ***Scott brothers to exec produce miniseries***

By [STEVEN ZEITCHIK](#)

Tony and Ridley Scott are bringing Michael Crichton's bestseller "The Andromeda Strain" to A&E, as the net increases its already aggressive push into original programming.

Brothers, via their Scott Free shingle, will exec produce a four-hour miniseries for the net based on Crichton's story of bacteria run amok. Mikael Solomon will direct from a script by Robert Schenkkan ("The Quiet American").

Project is set to go into production this summer. David Zucker and Tom Thayer are also exec producing.

The Scott brothers are prolific action directors and collaborate occasionally on TV fare, teaming up on HBO movie "RK281."

Overall, net is expected to announce Tuesday that it will invest about \$600 million in new projects and technology this year, an increase of about 20% over last year; that number will include infrastructure as well as content.

Among those new projects is a scripted series development slate, from which the net likely plans to produce at least one show. That series would be the first scripted original on the cabler since "Centre Street" seven years ago.

The five-project slate includes a host of crime- and cop-centric dramas; among them are "The Cleaner," "The Beast," "Homestead," "Takedown," and "Under."

Net will also announce that it has greenlit nonscripted forensics show "Crime 360," which will combined verite footage and CG images to re-enact criminal investigations.

And its tattoo-parlor drama "Inked" will yield a spinoff, "The Pendletons," which has been given a pilot deal.

News comes on top of two series which have already been announced--celebrity skein "The Two Coreys" and campus-supernatural nonscripted "Paranormal State"--as well as a number of pilot and development deals.

Net will also develop two Web-original series, "Dog 2.0" and "Nick's World."

A&E has enjoyed a banner year under topper Abbe Raven thanks in part to "The Sopranos," an expensive acquisition which has thus far paid off in the ratings, and to nonscripted originals like "Dog the Bounty Hunter."